United Nations S/PV.7669

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7669th meeting
Tuesday, 12 April 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Liu Jieyi	(China)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Letter dated 15 March 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/254)

Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2016/297)

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16-10267 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

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The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under- Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/254, which contains a letter dated 15 March 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I wish to also draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/297, containing the special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Ladsous and by His Excellency Mr. Elbio Rosselli, Permanent Representative of Uruguay, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): Council members will recall that in its report last year (see S/2015/446), the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations indicated that the peacekeeping operations of recent years have tended to last longer than in the past and that it is therefore all the more important to conclude their various stages as soon as conditions allowed. It is therefore my pleasure to present the special report of the Secretary General of March 31 on the Côte D'Ivoire (S/2016/297), in which he submits to the Council his proposals with respect to the conclusion of the peacekeeping phase in that country.

I welcome in particular the fact that since the finalization of the report last month, the Government of Côte D'Ivoire has continued to pursue reforms allowing for the expansion of the political space and the strengthening of unity and national cohesion. For example, last week the Government of Côte d'Ivoire adopted a bill on the status of the political opposition, which the opposition had long called for. The bill establishes the post of opposition leader with the rank of Minister of State, sets the rules and procedures for his or her designation, and — importantly — provides public funding for political parties. The opposition leader will be the candidate or the leader of the party or political grouping that had come in second in the most recent presidential election. In this case, that would be Mr. Pascal Affi N'Guessan, leader of the Front populaire ivoirien.

Meanwhile, discussions are under way to hold a constitutional referendum towards the end of the year for the adoption of a new constitution that would better reflect the evolution of the socio-political context in Côte d'Ivoire over the past decade. The amendments under consideration include the question of the nationality of the candidates in the presidential elections and the establishment of the post of Vice-President. The Independent Electoral Commission, for its part, has established a committee to review the redistricting proposals called for by the political parties of the opposition in view of the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Although the security situation is more or less stable, there are still several weak points, such as those highlighted in the special report that has been submitted to the Council today, including intracommunal conflicts in some regions of the country and military threats in the south-east. The country is riven with pockets of tension, in particular in the Boukani region in the north-east of Côte d'Ivoire, where violent clashes broke out on the night of 23 to 24 March between herders and farmers in Bouna and led to the deaths of 30 individuals and a massive displacement of more than 2,000 persons,

mainly women, children and the elderly. The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) deployed a detachment of its quick-reaction force to the town of Bouna to participate in protection of civilian efforts and to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Mindaoudou, accompanied by members of the Ivorian Government, visited the region and called for calm and restraint and made it clear that the path of dialogue should be followed in order to peacefully manage such clashes.

I must also point out that the relationship between the Ivorian security forces and the population remains a source of concern. For example, on 28 March there was an attack on the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) by unidentified individuals near Tabou in the south-west, which resulted in the injury of two FRCI soldiers.

Following the terrorist attacks in Grand-Bassam on 13 March — for the commission of which Al-Mourabitoun, a group based in northern Mali and affiliated with Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, claimed responsibility — the Government took proactive measures to identify and bring to justice those responsible for those attacks. The Government also launched criminal investigations and arrested the alleged attackers. At the same time, the Government of Mali, in close cooperation with the Ivorian Government, arrested two alleged assailants.

It is worth noting that, faced with these terrorist threats, the Governments of the subregion have decided to step up their cooperation at the subregional level as part of their common fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Last week, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal convened a quadripartite meeting of ministers responsible for security. During the meeting, they established a security platform and adopted a series of measures intended to prevent terrorist attacks. The ministers also decided to pool their efforts and to strengthen the links among their security services. Four days after the attack in Grand-Bassam, the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, the forces of UNOCI and the representatives of the United Nations Mission in Liberia held a quadripartite meeting in order to support the strengthening of border security cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

In general, since the post-election crisis that shook Côte d'Ivoire in late 2010 and early 2011, tangible progress has been made on all fronts. We have seen significant headway made at the political level, especially in terms of political dialogue, even though there is much to do in order to establish national reconciliation and social cohesion. There has also been notable progress in strengthening the legal system and efforts to respect human rights. The economy of Côte d'Ivoire has also undergone a remarkable transition, characterized by a rapid and sustained economic recovery and a general increase in production rates, with a gross domestic product in double digits in recent years. We welcome the Government's commitment to translating this economic recovery into a better standard of living for its people and to ensuring that the benefits of its growth are shared.

It must be reiterated that the country's security situation remains fragile and characterized by the presence of militias and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Therefore, the full re-establishment of the rule of law and a strong security environment throughout the country is still a challenge to be overcome. However, I also note that the stabilization seen throughout the country has enabled many displaced persons and refugees to return to Côte d'Ivoire, and indeed the country has avoided a humanitarian crisis. There may be some remaining needs and pockets of vulnerability here and there, but there is no humanitarian crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

(*spoke in English*)

Later this year, two significant political processes will be launched. The first is the national referendum, which I referred to earlier, and the second is the legislative elections. All political stakeholders have expressed their intention to participate, provided that conditions are in place to ensure the credibility and the legitimacy of the process. Additionally, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire expressed confidence when it received our strategic review team. That review is the basis for the report before the Council. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire expressed confidence that national security forces are now fully competent to secure those sensitive processes without security support from UNOCI.

Taking into account the situation in the country and our assessment of the positive trajectory of Côte d'Ivoire, the Secretary-General recommends that UNOCI be extended for a final period, until 30 June 2017. By 30 April 2017, UNOCI should have a streamlined, prioritized mandate focused on the tasks

that are most essential for consolidating peace, as detailed in the report.

The Secretary-General also recommends a final phase of the drawdown of UNOCI's military and police components, which would be reduced to 2,000 and 670 personnel, respectively, in the coming months. During the last year of their deployment, the troops and formed police units of UNOCI would support the Ivorian authorities in protecting the population in the event of incidents that could threaten a strategic reversal of its stability, while individual police officers and military observers would continue to provide operational and command-level mentoring and advice to their national counterparts.

All UNOCI military and police personnel and the vast majority of civilian personnel would leave Côte d'Ivoire by 30 April 2017 and the full closure of the Mission would occur by 30 June 2017. Given the positive trend in Côte d'Ivoire, the Secretary-General does not recommend the establishment of a successor United Nations mission there. It is therefore even more essential that every effort be made to ensure a seamless transition from peacekeeping during the next 14 months.

Over the course of its final year, UNOCI will prioritize the handover of its priority tasks to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations country team. Therefore, we are exploring options for engaging the country team in the mandated tasks of UNOCI while the Mission is still deployed and supported by UNOCI's budget, in keeping with the recommendations of the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. It would also be important for other partners to be closely associated in the exit strategy of UNOCI. We are therefore exploring options for setting up a transition mechanism that would involve all the stakeholders, including the Government, the United Nations, regional organizations, donors and other partners in the transformation of the United Nations engagement in the country.

(*spoke in French*)

In conclusion, I would say that UNOCI has made considerable progress since its deployment in April 2004, 12 years ago. The country is currently firmly anchored on the path of peace, stability and economic recovery. I want to commend and pay tribute to the Ivorian people's determination to move forward in building a stable and prosperous country. Congratulations are also in order in particular for President Alassane Ouattara, for his determined leadership and for his tireless efforts to build peace and promote democracy and the rule of law at a very crucial time in the country's history. I would also like to thank the Council for the key role it has played, including through the deployment of UNOCI and through its political support for our Mission at all levels. In the same vein, we think it important to thank our regional and subregional partners — the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union — and our many bilateral partners for the constructive roles they have played through the years in Côte d'Ivoire and its region.

Côte d'Ivoire's trajectory is a positive one. In my opinion, it would be prudent to wind up the current phase of our collective commitment represented by a peacekeeping mission in the country; in other words, the Mission needs to be drawn down. I therefore welcome the fact that the Security Council is ready to make a determination in the near future that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire is no longer a threat to regional peace and security and that it is open to defining the future role of United Nations in Côte d'Ivoire in order to uphold all efforts to build peace, stability and democracy in the country and the surrounding region.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Rosselli.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to address the members of the Council in my capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire.

At the outset, I would like to summarize the main findings in the final report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to paragraph 27 of Security Council resolution 2219 (2015), contained in document S/2016/254, and a review of the Group's findings arising from the informal consultations the Committee held on 11 March.

The Group highlighted that Côte d'Ivoire achieved important progress with regard to the overall stabilization of the country since the end of the post-election crisis in 2010-2011. It noted the good cooperation of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire throughout its mandate. It also recognized that the sanctions regime, since it was established in 2004, has succeeded in preventing the import of heavy weapons systems, including combat

aircraft and tanks, and the escalation of the conflict. The political and security situation in the country is stable and, in the period from 14 June 2015 and 22 February 2016, the Group identified only one violation of the arms embargo, with respect to night vision devices, a violation that Côte d'Ivoire subsequently disclosed to the Committee, showing that its compliance with the sanctions regime has improved dramatically.

The Group highlighted the positive developments in the country, the success of the presidential elections of October 2015 and the role of the sanctions regime, which was positively reviewed in the past, taking into account the progress made. However, the Group did express concern about the significant quantities of arms and ammunition that remain beyond the control of the Ivorian authorities. The Group emphasized that more efforts need to be made by the Ivorian authorities to control unregistered weapons and ammunition and that there is a need to address major issues including the improvement of the Ivorian security forces' functionality, dealing with former zone commanders and the integration of ex-combatants.

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which ended on 30 June 2015, was an important achievement for the stabilization process. The Group deemed it only partially successful, given that at least 16,500 ex-combatants still need to be fully reintegrated, and large quantities of weapons and ammunition remain unaccounted for. Although significant progress was made with regard to the security sector reform process, the Ivorian security forces continue face challenges. The former zone commanders, who occupy key roles in the Côte d'Ivoire security apparatus, continue to have access to private assets, financial resources and weapons.

With respect to weapons, the Group acknowledged the progress made in the cooperation with the Ivorian authorities, who gave the Group access to military cantonments and allowed it to conduct inspections. The Group continued to identify and document materiel acquired by the Forces Nouvelles in the immediate aftermath of the crisis of 2010-2011 in violation of the arms embargo. In this context, the Group expressed concern that such materiel could be diverted to armed and terrorist groups such as Ansar Dine and Boko Haram.

On the issue of customs and transport, the Group noted progress in the redeployment of the customs administration, but also highlighted the need to develop the capacity of the customs administration to monitor effectively cross-border-related traffic, implement a comprehensive and coordinated border-management strategy and provide adequate training, personnel, equipment and infrastructure. As a result of capacity shortfalls, large quantities of goods, including natural resources, cross the borders of Côte d'Ivoire without customs control.

In terms of natural resources, the Group referred to positive developments in the fight against the smuggling of cotton, cashew nuts, coffee and cocoa in the east and north of the country. Despite the commendable efforts of the Government, the smuggling of diamonds, artisanal gold, coffee and cocoa in the west of the country continues. In particular, the Group expressed concern that illegal gold mining in northern Côte d'Ivoire, along the border with Mali, could pose a threat if used to finance terrorism. It is important to underline that, although the diamond embargo was lifted almost two years ago, at present large quantities of Ivorian rough diamonds production are smuggled outside the legal chain of commerce certified through the Kimberley Process.

With regard to finances and individual sanctions, the Group acknowledged the Government's efforts to dismantle illegal taxation networks, reduce the number of checkpoints and prevent incidents of racketeering. Nevertheless, the Group ascertained that illegal checkpoints continued to exist, particularly on secondary roads and in border areas. The Group expressed concern about the non-application of the asset freeze and travel ban, by both Côte d'Ivoire and the countries of the region since they were first put into effect in February 2006. In the ensuing discussion, some Committee members acknowledged the progress made by Côte d'Ivoire and expressed their support for the lifting the sanctions measures targeting the country, while others expressed concern about the challenges the country is continuing to face.

Finally, the recommendations contained in the final report of the Group of Experts are still under consideration by the members of the Committee.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ambassador Rosselli for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bouah-Kamon (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to convey to you, Mr. President, my sincere and warm congratulations on China's accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. I am confident that your experience and leadership will be valuable assets when heading up the work of the Council work during this period. I would like to thank the Security Council for this platform to discuss issues pertaining to the development of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Once again, I take the opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative, Ms. Aichatou Mindaoudou, and her team for their outstanding work in collaboration with the Ivorian authorities and the French forces in Côte d'Ivoire.

In referring to the progress made in Côte d'Ivoire in his December 2015 report on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the Secretary-General stressed that

> "the successful conduct of the presidential election is the most powerful demonstration of the progress made in Côte d'Ivoire" (*S/2015/940, para. 89*).

He went on to indicate his optimism about the country's future. Three months after that report, it is with the same confidence and conviction that I take the floor today before the Council to say that Côte d'Ivoire is determined and will continue its march forward.

Following the successful presidential election, a new Government was set up and given specific new tasks focused on national reconciliation, social cohesion, good governance, the improvement of living conditions and the people's purchasing power, the promotion of youth employment and equal justice for all. Putting words into action, the President of the Republic and the Government have since undertaken a wide range of actions. After his re-election, the President of the Republic undertook consultations with an important sector of society, including traditional kings and chiefs, religious leaders, the National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims of the Ivorian crises and the Front populaire ivoirien, the main opposition party.

I would like to take this opportunity to also inform the Council that, in the context of the Head of State's resolve to enable all political actors to participate actively in the life of the nation, the Ivorian Government has decided to promote the candidate who came in second in October's presidential election, the head of the opposition, to the position of Minister of State.

The President of the Republic, convinced that national reconciliation and social cohesion are essential to laying the foundations of a unified nation, and echoing the wishes expressed during consultations, has taken several important steps, including the provisional release of several individuals detained during the post-election crisis who were awaiting trial, the unfreezing of the accounts of several opposition figures, the voluntary return of several exiles from Liberia, the announcement of the establishment of a high authority for rural land ownership, as well as the revision of the Constitution. That is in order to remove all conflicting elements in the fundamental law and to strengthen State institutions.

In addition to national reconciliation, security also remains key to stability and peace. As such, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes have attracted the attention of the Government and partners. There has been an implementation rate of 94 per cent for the former, and promising results for the latter. Efforts continue, as indicated in the Government's latest report on security sector reform and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which was conveyed to the Sanctions Committee in March. In particular, the adoption of a law on military programming 2016-2020 and a law on programming domestic security forces 2016-2020, and the establishment of the coordination, monitoring and reintegration cell were undertaken in order to take control of the residual activities of the former Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Authority.

Unfortunately, the cowardly and heinous terrorist attack suffered by innocent people in Grand-Bassam on 13 March reminds us of our duty to be vigilant and alert at all times. I would like to once again honour the memory of all those who were so cruelly torn from their families and loved ones. On behalf of the Ivorian Government, I take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to all countries and friendly institutions that lent their support during the ordeal that my country went through.

Far from being a discouraging factor, that unfortunate situation has only served to dramatically increase the resolute will of the Ivorian Government to

adopt, at the national, regional and international levels, measures to strengthen security, in particular with regard to the domestic deployment of security forces in all strategic sites and public areas, as rightly identified in the report of the Secretary-General. I would therefore reiterate once again the Ivorian Government's request for the total lifting of all sanctions on both individuals and weapons to Côte d'Ivoire, in particular to enable the appropriate equipment to reach our defence and security forces, to better control our borders — particularly in the west — and to promote effective military cooperation with friendly neighbouring countries so as to enable the national security forces to fulfil their sovereign duties.

With regard to the issue of justice and the human rights situation, the credo of the President of the Republic has always been zero tolerance for impunity. That inclination for equal justice for all resulted, during the establishment of the last Government, in the creation of new ministries for rights and civil liberties, solidarity and social cohesion, and for the compensation of victims. Proceedings against people of all political persuasions have been and will be brought progressively, based on the independence of the judicial system. The ability of Ivorian justice to henceforth handle its duties led the Head of State to affirm that from this point forward, no other Ivorian citizen would be handed over to the International Criminal Court.

The Government's programme of action also provides, as mentioned earlier, an important place for the promotion of youth employment because of the role that young people can play not only in economic growth, but also in the restoration and consolidation of peace. My delegation welcomes the actions taken on the ground by the Peacebuilding Office, alongside the Ivorian Government, through two priority plans for peacebuilding and the cross-border cooperation programme between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

My delegation welcomes the fact that most of the progress achieved by the Ivorian Government in terms of stabilization, social well-being and lasting peace was mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. My delegation takes note of that report and endorses the proposals seeking to extend for one last time UNOCI's mandate before its full drawdown on 30 June 2017. My Government hopes that the transitional assistance phase will give high priority to training and assisting the Ivorian defence and security forces, as well as to preparing the United Nations country team so as to ensure a smooth handover to the Ivorian Government.

It is to be noted that tremendous ongoing and continuous progress has been made, especially if we consider where we started from. My Government will continue its efforts to overcome any residual and emerging challenges. To that end, my country does indeed warrant encouragement and support from by the Council and the international community.

Before concluding, I should like to say that the commitment of the United Nations to Côte d'Ivoire under Chapter VII of the Charter represents for numerous observers a real success story that should go down in the history of our institution's peacekeeping operations throughout the world. The Council, the Secretary-General, friendly countries, the international community and the Ivorian Government should be extremely proud of the work that has been done and the major successes we have achieved. I would therefore like to convey on behalf of my Government my country's esteem for and gratitude to all of the stakeholders that I have just mentioned for their involvement and their belief in a Côte d'Ivoire that is based on peace and progress.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.